



County of Los Angeles
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March 19, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

SACRAMENTO UPDATE

County Interest Bills

SB 113 (Calderon), which would require that the presidential primary election be held on the first Tuesday in February in any year evenly divisible by the number four and that the primary not be consolidated with any statewide direct primary held in that year, was signed by the Governor on March 15, 2007. The bill contains language expressing the intent of the Legislature to reimburse counties for the costs of these elections in an expeditious manner upon certification of those costs. The Governor remarked during the bill signing ceremony that counties would be reimbursed for their election costs, which is consistent with the intent of the bill.

Child Care Budget Hearing

On March 13, 2007, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Education held a hearing on the Governor's proposals related to child care programs. Our Sacramento advocates testified in support of efforts to establish a CalWORKs Stage 2 and 3 fraud prevention and investigation system. In response to the testimony, the Committee Chair, Senator Jack Scott, recommended that staff of Subcommittee No. 1 and Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Health and Human Services, in coordination with the California Department of Education, prepare a report with recommendations to address the issue to the Subcommittee No. 1 members for the May Budget Revision hearings.

Assembly Republicans Unveil Health Care Reform Proposals

On March 14, 2007, Assembly Republican Leader Mike Villines held a press conference with his Republican colleagues to unveil a series of 18 legislative proposals to bring about incremental reform of California's health care delivery system. The proposals are aimed at maximizing choice, reducing health care costs, and increasing access to care. Assembly Member Villines stated that his caucus wanted to wait to release their version of health care reform until they had a chance to listen to, and confer with, business owners and health advocates. Mr. Villines indicated that these reforms will help the uninsured and strengthen the health care delivery system.

Some of the issues to be included in legislation would:

- Allow for pre-tax health savings accounts
- Provide a choice of benefits
- Establish additional, more convenient neighborhood clinics
- Invite out-of-state insurance companies to sell health plans
- Provide for the ability to move health insurance coverage from one job to another
- Expand coverage options for the working poor
- Provide higher Medi-Cal rates for doctors and hospitals
- Guarantee coverage for pre-existing conditions

The materials from the press conference are attached.

We will continue to keep you advised.

DEJ:GK
MAL:EW:acn

Attachment

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist
Local 660
Coalition of County Unions
California Contract Cities Association
Independent Cities Association
League of California Cities
City Managers Associations
Buddy Program Participants

Friday, March 16, 2007



Republican Caucus

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California State Assembly Republican Caucus Key Issues

Assembly Republican Health Care Reforms Will Maximize Choice, Reduce Costs And Increase Access

Common-sense measures will strengthen health care without mandates or tax hikes

3/14/2007

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SACRAMENTO – Affirming their commitment to ensure every California citizen has access to the quality health care they deserve to lead healthy lives, Assembly Republicans today visited Mercy General Hospital to unveil 18 health care reform measures that will maximize choice, reduce costs and increase access to care for all Californians – without costly new mandates, tax hikes or government programs.



Assembly Republicans introduce health care reform proposals that will maximize choice, reduce cost and increase access.

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"The health care reforms proposed by Assembly Republicans will ensure that every Californian can pick the type of health coverage they want, at a lower cost, while increasing access to the quality medical care they deserve in a fiscally-responsible manner," Villines said. "Our reforms will improve health care in California without creating new government programs or imposing higher taxes on California's working families and employers."

Among the reforms announced today is a measure giving individuals and businesses, not Sacramento politicians, the power to decide what benefits are included in their health plans so they can receive coverage tailored to their individual health needs that fit within the confines of their budgets. Another measure would eliminate bureaucratic laws that stand in the way of establishing more walk-in neighborhood health clinics, to expand access to convenient health services around the state.

Republicans also proposed changing the state's outdated tax laws so Californians can enjoy the tax benefits of health savings accounts. Under health savings accounts, individuals or employers contribute every month to tax-free accounts that build up over time, and can be used by individuals to purchase health care services that meet their needs.

"Shaping California's health care future is not about faceless statistics or confusing words

that only doctors or insurance companies can understand," Villines said. "It's about the real world challenges faced by Californians every day to afford the health care they deserve to keep their families healthy. Our reforms will not only help the uninsured gain access to health care, but they will also strengthen the system so the millions who currently have health coverage don't lose it."

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Maximizing Choice, Reducing Cost, Increasing Access Assembly Republican Health Care Reform Proposals

Maximizing Choice

Giving Californians the Freedom to Choose Health Savings Accounts. Updating California's outdated tax laws will enable workers and small businesses to choose these affordable plans that have lowered costs in 46 other states. Under health savings accounts, individuals or employers contribute every month to tax-free accounts that build up over time, and can be used by individuals to purchase health care services that meet their needs. (Assembly Bill 84, by Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi, MD, R-Lodi and Assembly Bill 245, by Assemblyman Chuck DeVore, R-Irvine)

Offering More Health Plan Choices for CalPERS Members. Offering health savings accounts and high-deductible health plans to CalPERS members will give them another affordable choice that puts them in the driver's seat when it comes to their own health care decision making. (Assembly Bill 1377, by Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi, MD, R-Lodi)

Empowering Medi-Cal Patients to Make Their Own Health Care Decisions. Enabling Medi-Cal patients the option to voluntarily receive their benefits through health savings accounts will put them in charge of their own health care decision-making and lower costs for taxpayers. (Assembly Bill 1635, by Assemblywoman Audra Strickland, R-Moorpark)

Allowing Individuals to Choose Their Own Health Insurance Benefits. By giving individuals and businesses, not Sacramento politicians, the power to decide what benefits are included in their health plans, Californians will receive coverage tailored to their individual health needs that fit within the confines of their budgets. (Assembly Bill 1214, by Assemblyman Bill Emmerson, R-Redlands)

Providing More Affordable Health Care Choices by Expanding Competition. Allowing out-of-state insurers to offer health benefit plans to Californians and allowing in-state insurers to also offer the health benefit plans will enable individuals and business owners to purchase high quality medical coverage at lower prices through more competition and greater choice. (Assembly Bill 1644, by Assemblyman Roger Nello, R-Fair Oaks)

Expanding Coverage Options for the Working Uninsured. Providing tax relief to employers who newly offer health insurance to their employees in the form of a High Deductible Health Plan will help make coverage more affordable for thousands of working Californians, and empower them to make their own health care decisions. (Assembly Bill 85, by Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi, MD, R-Lodi)

Reducing Cost

Making Coverage More Affordable by Creating a California Health Insurance Exchange. Scrapping penalties for individuals purchasing private health insurance outside their employer will enable uninsured workers to buy their own plan at a lower price. Allowing workers to buy their own policies from a new state health insurance exchange will reduce costs for them and guarantee coverage, even when changing jobs. (Assembly Bill 1072, by Assemblyman Ted Gaines, R-Roseville)

Enabling Small Businesses to Join Together to Purchase Plans at a Discount: Providing greater flexibility for small businesses to join with other businesses to purchase health plans at a group rate will enable them to provide quality coverage at a more affordable price. (Assembly Bill 1607, by Assemblyman Van Tran, R-Costa Mesa)

Creating a Single Group Health and Workers' Compensation Policy. Providing employers who cover their workers with group health insurance coverage the opportunity to purchase a single policy that combines health benefits and workers' compensation coverage gives employers another choice that will lower costs. (Assembly Bill 1619, by Assemblyman John J. Benoit, R-Palm Desert)

Lowering Out-of-Pocket Health Care Costs. Expanding state tax deductions for health care, dental and vision expenses will make health care more affordable for Californians, especially those who have no coverage through their employers. (Assembly Bill 1040, by Assemblyman Mike Duvall, R-Yorba Linda)

Increasing Access

Ensuring More Convenient Care at Neighborhood Health Clinics. Eliminating the barriers in state law that prohibit establishing additional walk-in, neighborhood health clinics will enable California families to access more convenient health clinics at pharmacies, grocery stores and shopping malls in their communities. (Assembly Bill 1643, by Assemblyman Roger Niello, R-Fair Oaks)

Raising Medi-Cal Reimbursement Rates for Doctors. Providing higher reimbursement rates for doctors who treat Medi-Cal patients will ensure access to quality care continues to be available for the elderly and less-fortunate who rely on Medi-Cal to receive basic health services. (Assembly Bill 1312, by Assemblyman Bill Emerson, R-Redlands)

Encouraging More Doctors to Provide Charity Care. Creating a new tax credit for doctors who provide services to the uninsured and underinsured will pave the way for more health professionals to perform no-cost charity care for those who would otherwise be unable to afford basic health care. (Assembly Bill 1592, by Assemblyman Bob Huff, R-Diamond Bar)

Increasing the Number of Well-Trained Nurses: Requiring community colleges to use merit-based admissions policies for nursing education programs and expanding these programs at state colleges and universities will ensure that there is always an expanding pool of qualified registered nurses to serve the changing health needs of California's diverse and growing population. (Assembly Bill 1559, by Assemblyman Tom Berryhill, R-Modesto)

Guaranteeing Coverage for Pre-Existing Conditions. Allowing Californians who are unable to obtain private health insurance due to pre-existing medical conditions the opportunity to purchase a health plan will give them peace of mind that they will not be forced to go into financial ruin just to afford life-saving treatments. (Assembly Bill 1378, by Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi, MD, R-Lodi)

Boosting Resources for Medical Clinics Serving the Poor. Reforming state law to require foundations created by the conversions of nonprofit hospitals and HMOs to spend 90 percent of their investment income on care at medical clinics will ensure that these health facilities will have more funds to provide health services for the less fortunate. (Assembly Bill 1572, by Assemblyman Chuck DeVore, R-Irvine)

Prioritizing Seismic Upgrades of Hospitals Based on Structural Condition. By utilizing science-based reforms to ensure seismic retrofitting of California's hospitals is performed on a worst-first basis, critical health facilities can be strengthened before the "big one" strikes, to ensure vital health services will always be available. (Assembly Bill 1304, by Assemblyman Cameron Smyth, R-Santa Clarita)